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INDONESIA-CHINA: Indonesia plans further soundings to explore a normalization of relations with China.

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[REDACTED] Suharto had stated earlier that Indonesia should not be left behind as other countries move on the China question.

[REDACTED] decision follows recent contacts between Indonesia and China in the United Nations, in which the Chinese indicated that they were prepared to move toward normalization of relations after relations with Japan have been established. The Indonesians regard this as a positive response to overtures to Peking in the President's annual state message of 16 August.

Given the initial Chinese response to the Indonesian feelers, the new soundings will probably go reasonably well, but the normalization process is likely to be slow. The Indonesian Army, which controls the government, is still reluctant to restore ties with China, suspended since 1967, and will particularly wish to postpone the establishment of any type of resident mission in Indonesia. Anti-Chinese feeling remains strong in other Indonesian political quarters, and Suharto has stated that he will make no major move until after the new congress--theoretically Indonesia's highest policy-making body--convenes its first working session in March 1973.

Some moves in the trade field could take place fairly quickly, however. The Indonesians are interested in this area as a first step toward normalization.

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